

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 L-03 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 IO-14 TRSE-00
DHA-02 MCT-01 ACDA-10 COME-00 EB-07 OMB-01 /091 W
-----015485 201827Z /46

O R 201730Z JUN 77

FM USDEL GRENADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0068

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

UNCLAS GRENADA 0058

FOR THE SECRETARY, ARA AMB TODMAN, L/ARA FWILLIS

FROM USDEL OASGA

USOAS DEL 42

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, OAS, SHUM

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR MCGEE'S STATMENT INTRODUCING JOINT RESOLUTION
ON HUMAN RIGHTS JUNE 20

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT MADE BY AMB MCGEE
IN COMMITTEE I MORNING OF JUNE 20 INTRODUCING DRAFT RESOLUTION
CO-SPONSORED BY VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
AND THE US.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

I HAVE REQUESTED THE FLOOR TO PRESENT THE DRAFT RESOLUTION
ON HUMAN RIGHTS COSPONSORED BY VENEZUELA, COSTA RICA, THE
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, AND THE UNITED STATES. COSPONSORSHIP
REFLECTS THE INPUT OF MANY PEOPLE IN THIS DOCUMENT. THIS IS THE
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FIRST TIME I HAVE SPOKEN HERE, AND I WILL BE BRIEF, BECAUSE WE
SHARE THE GOAL OF COMPLETING THE WORK OF THIS ASSEMBLY AS
EARLY AS POSSIBLE. YET IT WOULD BE WRONG TO DEAL HASTILY WITH
THE MAJOR BUSINESS OF OUR MEETING -- HOW TO PROMOTE HUMAN
RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS. I BELIEVE THAT OUR RESOLUTION GOES FAR
TOWARD SATISFYING THE CONCERNS OF ALL OF US IN THIS ROOM.

INDEPENDENTLY OF THE OBLIGATIONS OUR GOVERNMENTS HAVE UNDERTAKEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN THE OAS, WE ARE BOUND BY OUR OWN NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS AND THE TRADITIONS AND PRINCIPALS OF OUR COMMON HERITAGE. RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN IS ENJOINED BY OUR HISTORY AND BY OUR TRUST IN THE RULE OF LAW. FOR IT IS OUR LEGAL INSTITUTIONS, IN THE END, THAT DISTINGUISH US FROM REPRESSIVE, TOTALITARIAN SOCIETIES WHERE THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL ARE SUBORDINATED ABSOLUTELY TO THE CLAIMS OF PARTY, CLASS, AND IDEOLOGY. WE STAND TOGETHER IN OUR REJECTION OF TOTALITARIANISM. LET US STAND TOGETHER IN OUR REJECTION OF ITS METHODS.

SOMETIMES WE HAVE SEEN A CONCERTED EFFORT HERE IN OUR DELIBERATIONS TO LINK, AND ALMOST TO EQUATE, DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITH THE STRUGGLE AGAINST TERRORISM. THEY ARE NOT UNRELATED. BUT THEY ARE DISTINCT ISSUES, SEPARATE IN THEIR IMPLICATIONS. THEY NEED TO BE TREATED IN DIFFERENT WAYS. AMBASSADOR DE LA COLINA HAS MADE THIS POINT WITH GREAT ELOQUENCE AND LOGIC. THE DELEGATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, A COSPONSOR OF THE RESOLUTION THAT I AM NOW INTRODUCING, HAS PRESENTED ITS OWN SEPARATE RESOLUTION ON TERRORISM. AND THAT RESOLUTION MAKES CLEAR WHERE THE DISTINCTIONS LIE. IT TOO DESERVES OUR SUPPORT. I SHOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE DELEGATION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ON THE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IT HAS PLAYED AT THIS ASSEMBLY IN ADVANCING THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WHILE DEFENDING THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

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TERRORISM IS INDEED A SCOURGE OF OUR AGE. ALL OF US HAVE KNOWN IT, BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT HUMAN RIGHTS SUFFER WHEN A STATE UNDER ATTACK LASHES BACK BLINDLY, INJURING INNOCENT AND GUILTY ALIKE. AND HERE IS THE DIFFERENCE: TERRORISM IS A CRIME AGAINST THE STATE; THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS A CRIME COMMITTED BY THE STATE AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL.

MY GOVERNMENT REJECTS TERRORISM AS WELL AS COUNTER-TERRORISM, A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE THAT IS UNDERMINING LEGAL INSTITUTIONS IN OUR HEMISPHERE. I REFER TO EXTRA-LEGAL FORMS OF SUPPRESSION IN WHICH SUSPECT PERSONS DISAPPEAR OR ARE FOUND MYSTERIOUSLY MURDERED AND IN WHICH GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN IMPLICATED. ALL FORMS OF TERRORISM ARE EQUALLY HEINOUS, IT SEEMS TO US, WHETHER UNPROVOKED ATTACKS ON INNOCENT PERSONS OR HARSH REPRISALS AGAINST THOSE SUSPECTED OF COMPLICITY IN SUCH ATTACKS. OR, MORE OFTEN, SUSPECTED OF MERE OPPOSITION TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS. THESE REPREHENSIBLE ACTS MUST END IN ALL COUNTRIES IF THE WORLD IS TO KNOW THE FULFILLMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN ASPIRATIONS TO FREEDOM AND DIGNITY.

I APPEAL FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS DRAFT RESOLUTION AIMED AT

STRENGTHENING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAS. ITS LANGUAGE DEALS CLEARLY WITH OUR SHARED CONCERNS. THE RESOLUTION BEGINS WITH BRIEF REFERENCES TO PRINCIPLES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AND PLACES HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE PROPER HEMISPHERIC PERSPECTIVE. AFTER REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF ALL MEMBER STATES TO THE DIGNITY AND FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL, IT DISTINGUISHES OUR VALUES FROM THOSE OF TOTALITARIAN SOCIETIES. IT MAKES CLEAR THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND THE DEMANDS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AND IT EMPHASIZES OUR COMMON TRADITION WHILE TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE DIVERSITY AMONG US AND OUR SHARED DEDICATION TO PROGRESS IN FREE SOCIETIES.

WE FEEL THAT THE OPERATIVE PART OF THE RESOLUTION SHOULD COMMAND UNCLASSIFIED

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BROAD SUPPORT. IT COMMENDS THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION FOR ITS WORK AND DEMONSTRATES OUR COMMITMENT TO MULTILATERAL DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY CALLING FOR AN INCREASE IN ITS BUDGET. WE APPLAUD THE REMARKS OF MY COLLEAGUE FROM JAMAICA TO THIS EFFECT. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HAS DESCRIBED THE ADVERSE EFFECT THAT BUDGETARY RESTRAINTS ARE HAVING ON ITS WORK. IF THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE IS TO BE DEALT WITH EFFECTIVELY IN A MULTILATERAL WAY, WE MUST RESPOND TO HIS APPEAL BY PROVIDING THE FUNDS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH THE IMPORTANT TASKS WE HAVE ENTRUSTED TO THE COMMISSION.

OUR RESOLUTION REQUESTS MEMBER STATES TO COOPERATE WITH THE COMMISSION AND RECOMMENDS A PROGRAM OF VISITS TO PERMIT CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE MEMBERS AND GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE GROUPS ANXIOUS TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS. THERE SHOULD BE NO QUESTION ABOUT MEMBER STATES COOPERATING WITH THE COMMISSION. BY VISITING EACH COUNTRY TO SPEAK WITH INTERESTED OFFICIALS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS, THE COMMISSION COULD OPEN A DIALOGUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOP CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM.

THE RESOLUTION, THAT WE HAVE SUBMITTED, CONCLUDES BY SETTING CERTAIN MINIMUM STANDARDS WHICH WE BELIEVE ARE ESSENTIAL TO UPHOLD OUR TRADITIONS. NO ONE CAN DENY THAT IT IS BASIC TO OUR CIVILIZATION THAT ALL AMONG US HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS, THE RIGHT NOT TO BE TORTURED, NOT TO BE SUMMARILY EXECUTED AND NOT TO BE DETAINED WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY TO TEST CHARGES IN A FAIR JUDICIAL PROCEEDING. THESE SEEM TO BE NEGATIVE RIGHTS BUT THEY ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO A FREE SOCIETY. WITHOUT THEM, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS HAVE LITTLE MEANING.

MR CHAIRMAN, OUR ACTIONS HERE ARE UNDER CAREFUL SCRUTINY, NOT ONLY THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAS BUT ALSO ELSEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD. WE MUST MEET THE TEST. I THINK THAT PASSING THE RESOLUTION UNCLASSIFIED

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NOW BEFORE US WILL CONSTITUTE A CLEAR SIGNAL THAT THE ORGANIZATION
OF AMERICAN STATES TAKES ITS RESPONSIBILITIES SERIOUSLY AND THAT
IT IS PREPARED TO WRK FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN
AN EFFECTIVE, MULTILATERAL, COOPERATIVE FASHION; THAT THE OAS
IS READY TO ENTRUST THIS HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMISSION
IT ESTABLISHED; AND THAT IT IS DETERMINED TO SECURE OUR HERITAGE
AND OUR FUNDAMENTAL VALUES. I URGE YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE
RESOLUTION THAT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED. THANK YOU.
MCGEE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Media Identifier:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2098610
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR MCGEE'S STATMENT INTRODUCING JOINT RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS JUNE 20
TAGS: PORG, SHUM, OAS, (MCGEE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0083e779-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009